

Ethnologically they are perhaps of Dravidian origin,<sup>1</sup> being a branch of a great nomadic race. According to tradition, most of the clan perished when the state was raided by Musalmans years prior to the advent of the East India Company. Those who were fortunate enough to escape took to the jungles, becoming wanderers, and thus started their gipsy form of existence. Legend has it among them that the sacred threads of the Brahmins who were butchered in this particular Muslim raid weighed seventy-two maunds or 5,760 lbs.

As far as one can judge, the Bhandus probably have an ethnological connection with the Sansias, Haburas, Kanjars, Karwal Nats, and Jats; but the present day members of the clan named differ considerably. Prior to their proscription it was usual for the Bhandus to meet every rainy season on the plain of the old ruined city of Nuh-Khera to the north of Jalesar in the United Provinces for the settling of disputes and marriages. No definite information can be obtained to the etymological meaning of the word Bhandu, but one villager suggested that it might have sprung from the practice of villagers and others, who on seeing strangers on their land, invariably yelled out, Bhag-tu-- "Run away", obviously an aetiological derivation. Hollins is of the opinion that the term comes from "Bhante" in the sense of "broken" and that the name implies the tribes is composed of various mixed elements, which is supported by its tradition of Rajput origin.

Gots.--The Bhandus are said to be divided into some thirty-six gots or clans but only the names of twenty-four have been ascertained. Almost every got differs in the observance of customs relating to worship, marriages, burial, etc., of which differences mention will be made later. Information with regard to this must be taken with a certain amount of reserve as most of the Bhandus themselves had no idea there were so many gots. One man on being questioned gave the information that there were twelve and a half gots, explaining that some were given half a got, which is called the Hijara Got.

As far as has been ascertained the system of marriage is exogamous with the exception of one got the Bhandswals. A particular explanation is offered as to why the names of the gots were chosen, many of them being selected from words in every day use. Several of the gots I have been able to compare with those mentioned by Inspector Baldeo Sahai's report on origin, habits and customs of the wandering tribes, which classes as Khanjars and Behrias inhabiting the Agra district in 1875. The Behrias usually marry Bhandu women and the difference from the Bhandu is therefore merely in that they follow a different profession while the Sansias, Haburas, Kanjars, and Nats may have a common origin with the Bhandus. The Mahar referred to as one of the three principal Kanjar gots and Dhapu Got has a distinct affinity with the Dhapu mentioned by Baldeo Sahai, who refers to it as one of the 'Puckas' or gots which claim their descent from Bidhu, one of the persons whom legend ascribes to have been born in the west.

<sup>1</sup> W. Crooke's "Tribes and Castes of the N.-W. Provinces"